

# Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin

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## National Weather Summary December 27, 2009 - January 2, 2010

**Highlights:** Across much of the U.S., cold but relatively tranquil weather prevailed in the wake of a sprawling, late-December storm. Weekly temperatures averaged at least 10 degrees F below normal in parts of the **northern and central Plains** and the **western Corn Belt**. Significant precipitation was mostly confined to **New England**, the **central Gulf Coast region**, and the **Northwest**. Snow intensified late in the week across **New England**, where 1- to 3-foot totals were common. Meanwhile, showers boosted soil moisture across **Florida's peninsula**, but aggravated wet conditions in the **central Gulf Coast region**. Meanwhile, some additional light snow blanketed the **Corn Belt**, where producers continued to struggle to harvest remaining corn. In the **western Corn Belt**, cold weather and 1- to 2-foot snow depths maintained stress on livestock. Pre-existing snow continued to provide the **Plains'** winter wheat crop with beneficial moisture and insulation, especially across the northern half of the region. Farther west, widespread precipitation fell as far south as **northern California** and as far east as the **northern Rockies**, while **southern California** and the **Southwest** remained mostly dry. At week's end, an Arctic blast lowered temperatures below -30 degrees F in parts of the **upper Midwest**. Through January 2, temperatures remained above 32 degrees F across the **Deep South**; however, freezes were noted in some of **Florida's winter agricultural areas** beginning on January 4.

Early in the week, cold air continued to settle across the **nation's mid-section**. Daily-record lows for December 27 included -15 degrees F in **Laramie, WY**, and 23 degrees F in **Waco, TX**. **Laramie** also posted a record for December 28, with a low of -20 degrees F. Very cold conditions also prevailed in snow-covered areas of the **Intermountain West**, where **Utah's Bryce Canyon Airport** registered a daily-record low (-17 degrees F) on December 28. As 2010 arrived, the coldest air of the season surged across the **upper Midwest**. Daily-record lows for New Year's Day included -26 degrees F in **Sisseton, SD**, and -33 degrees F in **Grand Forks, ND**. **Sisseton** and **Grand Forks** (both -35 degrees F) also achieved records the following day. Other daily-record lows for January 3 included -30 degrees F in **Sioux Falls, SD**; **Spencer, IA**; and **Jamestown, ND**. **Sioux Falls'** temperature represented its lowest reading since January 1, 1974, when the low dipped to -32 degrees F.

Snow showers were common across the **lower Great Lakes States**, where daily-record totals included 3.0 inches (on December 27) in **Columbus, OH**, and 2.8 inches (on December 28) in **Flint, MI**. In **Great Lakes** snow-belt locations, weekly snowfall reached 15.6 inches in **Marquette, MI**; 14.7 inches in **Buffalo, NY**; and 13.5 inches in **Erie, PA**. On December 29, some light rain and snow showers affected the **southern Plains**, where **Texas** locations such as **Midland** (1.3 inches) and **Dallas-Ft. Worth** (0.2) received daily-record snowfall totals. On the strength of a 3.0-inch snowfall on December 24, **Dallas-Ft. Worth** also completed its second-snowiest December behind 1898 (5.5 inches). During the second half of the week, storminess briefly

increased across the **Intermountain West**, where December 28-30 snowfall in **Utah** reached 23.0 inches in **Alta** and 7.1 inches in **Salt Lake City**. Later, snow spread across **Montana**, resulting in daily-record totals for December 31 in locations such as **Simpson** (4.0 inches) and **Turner** (2.1 inches). Toward week's end, additional precipitation arrived in the **Northwest**. **Stanley, ID** (0.86 inch on January 1), netted a daily-record precipitation amount, while December 31 - January 1 rainfall totals reached 4 to 6 inches in parts of **southwestern Oregon** and **northwestern California**. A wind gust to 76 m.p.h. was clocked along the **Oregon coast at Cape Blanco**. Meanwhile, a winter storm took shape near the **New England coast**. In **Vermont, Burlington** netted 19.0 inches of snow on January 2 en route to a 2-day total of 35.4 inches. Other January 2-3 snowfall amounts included 12.1 inches in **Bangor, ME**, and 10.1 inches in **Boston, MA**.

December ended on a dry note across much of **Alaska**. However, weekly temperatures ranged from 10 degrees F above normal in parts of **western Alaska** to as much as 10 degrees F below normal across the Alaskan interior. Daily-record highs were tied in locations such as **Nome** (38 degrees F on December 28) and **King Salmon** (43 degrees F on December 30). Farther south, mostly dry weather in **Hawaii** promoted large temperature variations. For example, **Hilo (on the Big Island)** posted a daily-record high of 86 degrees F on December 29. Later, **Lihue, Kauai**, notched a daily-record low of 57 degrees F (on January 2).

*National Weather Summary provided by USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board.  
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## Agricultural Summary December 28 – January 3, 2009

**Highlights:** Dry weather settled in over much of the country, with areas in the Southwest, Rocky Mountains, and northern Great Plains receiving 2 percent or less of their normal precipitation. Conversely, locations along the Pacific Coast, as well as in the Four Corners Region, New England, and Florida received precipitation totaling more than 200 percent of normal. With the exceptions of the Pacific Coast, New England, and isolated areas in the Rocky Mountains, temperatures were below average during the week. Average temperatures plunged to at least 9 degrees below normal throughout much of the northern and central Great Plains, where extensive snow cover helped to insulate the winter wheat crop.

Several storm systems moved through California, delivering rainfall to much of the State and providing favorable soil moisture for the continued emergence of the winter wheat and barley crops. Small grain producers remained busy completing ground preparation for oat acreage that had yet to be seeded and making herbicide and fertilizer applications where needed. Fruit growers performed orchard maintenance and continued to harvest grapefruit, lemons, mandarins, and oranges. Post-harvest pruning was completed in nut orchards, while vegetable growers harvested a variety of winter crops.

In Arizona, the cotton harvest was virtually complete ahead of last year and the 5-year average pace. Alfalfa hay conditions varied from poor to good depending on location. Vegetable and fruit growers continued to ship a variety of crops including broccoli, cabbage, celery, honeydew melons, lemons, lettuce, and spinach.

Winter wheat in the Southern High Plains of Texas responded well to improved soil moisture levels, while the wheat and oat crops in South Central Texas suffered because of mildew. Cotton producers in areas of the Northern Plains completed fieldwork in preparation for spring planting. Pecan harvest in the Trans-Pecos was delayed due to a late freeze, while cabbage and spinach harvest was active in South Texas.

With freezing temperatures reported as far south as Florida's southern Peninsula, growers ran heaters to keep their seed potatoes from freezing and strawberry producers utilized irrigation to help prevent the amount of freeze damage. Highlands County growers reported a small amount of frozen tomatoes. Some cotton and soybean fields remained unharvested due to abnormally wet fields. Vegetables moving through the market included cabbage, celery, cucumbers, radishes, snap beans, squash, and sweet corn.

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